and is totally unacceptable. Government have also apprised the international community of Pakistan's role in activities directed against India.

**Siacben Settlement with Pakistan**

224. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have offered to Pakistan, as a confidence building measure a Siachen settlement based on disengagement and redeployment of forces according to a mutually agreed schedule; and

(b) if so, what is Pakistan Government's reaction and response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On 19 February, 1994 Pakistan conveyed its response which is under consideration with the Government,

**Pakistan U.S. Armed Forces Joint Exercise**

225. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the successive joint exercise of the armed forces of Pakistan and U.S. held recently in the rugged mountains of Peshawar with the objective of preparing Pakistan and American troops for highly specialised high altitude warfare; and

(b) if so, how do Govt. view the growing US military cooperation with Pakistan and how such military exercises have a bearing on the defence of the country's frontiers?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Government are aware that a month long joint training exercise was conducted from 6 January to 10 February, 1994 between the US Army Special Forces and Pakistan Special Services Group in the Cherat region of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. A similar exercise was also conducted in February 1993.

(b) Government constantly monitor all developments having a bearing on India's security, including the on-going military cooperation between the US and Pakistan. Government take all necessary measures to safeguard the unity and territorial integrity of the nation.

**Pending Passports at Chandigarh and Jalandhar Passport Offices**

226. SHRI VIRENDRA K ATARI A: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a huge number of passports are lying pending at Chandigarh and Jalandhar passport offices and people have to wait for more than a year to get their passports;

(b) what is the number of such pending passports during 1993 and till date at Chandigarh and Jalandhar passport offices;

(c) whether there was any proposal under Government's consideration to provide more staff to these passport offices; if so, whether the same has been done; and

(d) what steps Government are taking to relieve the people and by when people will see the results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) The number of Passport applications pending for over one month at Chandigarh and Jalandhar passport offices was 49,900 and 67,032 as on 31.12.93 and 44,785 and 58,928 on 4.2.94 respectively. The time taken for the issue of a passport on a first-cum-firstserved basis when the application was complete in all respects